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Contact: Saleen Shah | 212.822.9566/917.664.1428 | sshah@citizensnyc.org

2015 NEW YORKER FOR NEW YORK GALA HONORS COMMUNITY, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS

The nation's oldest neighborhood microfunder celebrates 40 years of supporting volunteer groups who improve the quality of life in the city's most underserved communities

New York, NY (February 23, 2015) -- Citizens Committee For New York City ("Citizens Committee") will host its **2015 New Yorker for New York Gala Awards** on Monday, February 23, 2015 at 6PM at historic Gotham Hall in Midtown Manhattan. The VIP event will benefit the nonprofit with funds going towards community improvement projects and quality of life initiatives across city neighborhoods.

"Our work is in hundreds of the city's poorest neighborhoods filling gaps whether it be music lessons for poor kids or vegetable gardens for neighborhoods with little access to fresh and affordable produce or a safety program for New Yorkers who feel unsafe," said **Peter H. Kostmayer**, CEO of Citizens Committee. "Whatever the need and wherever the gap, Citizens Committee for New York City is there to fill it as best we can."

He continued, "A few things every true New Yorker has in common are their total love and unbridled pride for this city and the desire to make it livable for everyone. The awards presented tonight celebrate civic participation, not the sexiest term these days but let's face it – it's an important ingredient that keeps this city the greatest in the world."

Cardinal Timothy Dolan will present the *2015 New Yorker for New York Award* to **Raymond W. Kelly**, the former NYC Police Commissioner and President of Risk Management Services at Cushman & Wakefield. With 50 years in public service, and the last 12 as Commissioner of the City of New York, Commissioner Kelly is one of the world's most well-known and highly esteemed leaders in law enforcement.

Peter W. May, Chairman of the Boards of Trustees at Mount Sinai Health System, will present the *Daniel Patrick Moynihan Award for Public Service* to **Dr. Angela Diaz**, the

Jean C. and James W. Crystal Professor of Pediatrics and Preventative Medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Dr. Diaz is an internationally recognized leader in the field of adolescent health whose work and life mission as a physician, teacher, researcher and advocate has reduced health disparities and improved health outcomes for adolescents around the globe.

To celebrate 40 years of Citizens Committee's work, **Alex Guarnaschelli**, Iron Chef and Executive Chef at Butter Restaurant and **Lee Goldberg**, Chief Meteorologist for WABC-TV's Eyewitness News, will present the *Osborn Elliott Awards for Community Service* to five remarkable New Yorkers whose neighborhood improvement projects address serious local issues. They are:

Heather Butts, Co-Founder - H.E.A.L.T.H. for Youths | North Shore, Staten Island
H.E.A.L.T.H for Youths collaborates with nonprofit organizations, schools, colleges and community organizations to offer underserved adolescents and young adults various programs and workshops in the areas of physical health, mental health, community service learning, academic skills, social/cultural education and life-skills. The volunteer group's projects include: A "Cops and Kids" gardening project at Staten Island's 120th Precinct; college and graduate school readiness workshops in Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan; physical and mental health workshops citywide; tree stewardship and gardening service learning programs in The Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island; a reading program for middle school students in Staten Island and many more projects throughout the city.

Jennifer Chu, Founder - Elmhurst Community Garden | *Elmhurst, Queens*
Elmhurst Community Garden formed after young people in the community pursued their vision to rehabilitate and beautify a large derelict lot that had been a neighborhood eyesore for over 25 years, turning it into a much needed green oasis and urban farm in the middle of Elmhurst! The group recently took on a composting project and built a three-bin compost system, which is managed by garden members and neighborhood youth. It's the first community compost drop off site in Elmhurst and the project fits well with the City's PlaNYC 2030 vision of a greener NYC!

Matthew Jamison, Co-Founder - Feed Your Mind Music | *Crown Heights, Brooklyn*
Feed Your Mind Music seeks to develop stronger communities through constructive use of leisure time with music making and music learning for youth in Central Brooklyn. The volunteer group's "Music Matters" workshop series facilitates music learning activities within the student's own community, and provides a safe and constructive environment to go to after school and during the summer. The group's leaders believe that if young people stay occupied in the arts, they are less likely to engage in illicit activity.

Lily Kesselman, Co-Founder - South Bronx Farmers Market | *Mott Haven, The Bronx*
Taking stock of their neighborhood, South Bronx residents clearly saw a lack of fresh available and affordable organic produce in their neighborhood. How did they respond? They planned and launched the first Saturday farmers market, the **South Bronx Farmers Market**, in the community, where farmers could sell fruits and vegetables and eggs to local residents. It quickly became a main resource in the neighborhood and garnered local media attention. The volunteer group participates in the City of New York's "Health Bucks" Program, in which low-income shoppers receive a \$2 "Health Buck" for every \$5 spent, and collaborates on healthy cooking community workshops with GrowNYC and the NYC Department of Health.

Tania Lopez, Founder - Coqui the Chef | *Hunts Point, The Bronx*

Coqui the Chef provides nutrition and culinary education for South Bronx youth and their parents. Partnering with local community organizations, the group offers lessons on good nutrition and how to prepare healthy snacks. The program teaches the basics of food preparation in order to enable healthy eating choices and combat the high levels of obesity in the community.

The evening will begin with an open bar cocktail reception in the Mezzanine Room overlooking the Grand Ballroom, where guests will have a chance to mingle and meet the evening's awardees and community honorees, as well as Citizens Committee board members.

The cocktail reception will be followed by the formal gala program and dinner in the Grand Ballroom, special performance by the nationally renowned **P.S. 22 Chorus of Staten Island** and an evening of dancing to the captivating sounds of **The Peter Duchin Orchestra**.

About Citizens Committee for New York City

Our mission is simple: to help New Yorkers -especially those in low-income areas- come together and improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Residents are uniquely situated to define and act on the issues affecting their communities. When provided with modest support, neighborhood and school groups can effectively mobilize community resources to improve quality of life. Citizens Committee for New York City supports these grassroots efforts by offering grants, skills-building workshops and further technical support in the form of project planning assistance and an equipment share library. **In 2014, we provided 366 projects with \$1.6 million in grants and services, and our staff facilitated 30 workshops to over 500 social entrepreneurs.** Since 1975, we have promoted the spirit of volunteerism and local engagement that drives our work.

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